

Spring Creek Reservoir to be drained this summer

CPW
addressing
“safety
deficiencies”
with outlet pipe

Stephanie Maltarich
Special to the Times

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) plans to drain Spring Creek Reservoir this summer to address several maintenance concerns.

During the Taylor Local User Group’s meeting on April 8, Taylor Scott, a dam safety engineer, explained CPW’s plans for a dam rehabilitation project that will take place this coming summer. The rehabilitation project will address outlet pipe “safety deficiencies.”

“We would like to start drawing down the reservoir in mid-May depending on how quickly we could get up there,” said Scott.

Reaching the outlet pipe requires fully draining the reservoir to deadpool. About 1,400

acre-feet of water in the 1,600 acre-feet impoundment would be pumped out of the reservoir and into the concrete spillway.

In addition to adding a lining to repair the pipe, CPW also plans to add equipment for remote monitoring of the reservoir.

Construction is anticipated to begin on Aug. 1, and will last approximately 90 days.

Scott explained that a full breach of the dam would not be necessary, but a dry reservoir is needed to safely access the outlet pipe.

Draining the reservoir will also impact stream flow, into Spring Creek and the Taylor River. Stream flows will remain steady around 50-60 cubic feet per second (cfs) through June due to snowmelt. In July, flows will likely trickle down to 20 cfs as the reservoir completely drains.

The working group discussed the impacts the project would have on recreational and agricultural users of the Taylor River Watershed.

Don Sabrowski, manager of Wilder on the Taylor, asked if it would be possible to delay the draining start date to late May or early June while still meeting the



Katy Mooney

The paddleboarding season at Spring Creek reservoir will be short lived this summer as Colorado Parks and Wildlife plans to drain the lake to make repairs.

Aug. 1 deadline.

Scott explained that CPW is flexible with the start date. “We do have a contingency plan, in case we needed to back it up a little bit. We can make it work”

Andy Spann, a longtime Gunnison rancher, said a delayed start date would be better for irrigation.

“I would like to have some backup in those first two weeks in July, because that’s the hard time for us trying to get every last drop out there to finish your crop. It would help,” Spann said.

For boaters, draining the reservoir will give a boost to the rapids and the river running fun on the Taylor River. More water usually equals better conditions for rafting and kayaking.

Mark Schumacher of Three Rivers Resort said draining the reservoir will have a positive effect, but he was concerned for those needing water for agriculture. His vote was to start draining on a date that was most helpful for agriculture interests.

“It’s unfortunate they have to drain it,” Schumacher said. “But

it needs to get done.”

“I think that’s something we can do and that is one reason we wanted to have this discussion. We can make it work if we start releasing in June or late May. So if that helps out, we can do that,” said Scott.

The project will be completed in mid-October, and CPW plans to begin refilling the reservoir as soon as possible, with the majority of the refill taking place next spring during runoff.



Bella Biondini

Easy Jim at Doubleshot

The past few weeks have seen a revival in live music in Gunnison. The band Easy Jim got in on the action with a performance at Doubleshot Cyclery.

Groundbreaking Ceremony

Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport Terminal
Friday, April 30th at 12:00 pm

The groundbreaking site will be on the east end of the terminal.
The public may access the site via South Boulevard.

The public is invited to come celebrate the groundbreaking. Light refreshments will be served.



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